

[P. 1196] Wukichumi

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It was said that an evil shaman who feared discovery through this means would try to render the narcosis ineffectual, i.e., blank, and drinkers who failed to have visions always blamed this cause.

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On the twelfth day after the ritual a general celebration took place. The children dressed in their best. Fathers provided meat and fish, mothers, baskets of acorn mush. The leader, relatives, and children, "all who had anything to do with the drinking," took part. The chief made a little speech recapitulating the events and causes that led up to this literal "break fast," for none of these persons had as yet touched any meat. Even at this time those who had actually drunk tañai took only a minute piece of meat, which they invariably vomited.

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This little feast provided an occasion for betrothal if any families cared to take advantage of it. This is the only indication that the ritual was an induction into anything, and even this was only into maturity, so to say. Even this is inferential, for informants denied the ritual any formal aspect of initiation into tribal life, ceremonial participation, or even spiritual experience, for many of the drinkers already had dream helpers. The betrothal preparations were no different from those normally made by a boy's parents. On such an occasion, at the time of the feast, if one of the girls who had drunk tañai was desired as a daughter-in-law by some family, they would go to her home before the feast and array her for it with gifts which they brought. Even if the offer was accepted, the young couple would not marry at once but "waited until they were grown up" (M.P.).

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Jimsonweed was well known as an anaesthetic. It was used both internally and as a poultice. When jimsonweed was drunk, the meat tabu was observed in so far as circumstances permitted. A twenty-four hour fast was the minimum, but two or three days were preferred. When so used, the jimsonweed was thought to have a power for healing, a quality beyond mere anaesthesia. Fractures were set and bound while the injured person was in a coma. Poultices were made of mashed leaves of the plant and tied over sprains and flesh injuries that were excruciatingly painful (see Holo'anfi's experience, p. 72).

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M.L.'s first husband took jimsonweed to help severe rheumatism. His mother's sister suggested it and her husband prepared it. The sick man drank only gruel and water for six days; then he drank the decoction. He got up and walked to his aunt's house. He ran and jumped; he was led around by the arm. His head ached. He saw things flying about which terrified him. Then he took an eagle-feather brush and brushed off his aunt. When he recovered, his rheumatism had disappeared.